

REVOLUTION

FIGHTING PAPER FOR WORKING CLASS YOUTH 20P ★ ISSUE 1 MARCH 1994

RACIST ATTACKS:

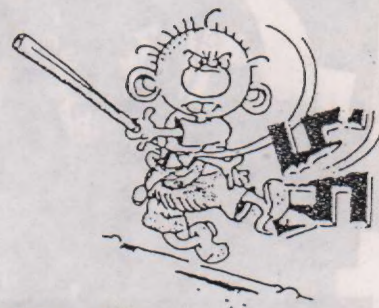


WE FIGHT BACK!



FIGHTING RACISM

Build self defence groups!



Bengali youth in Tower Hamlets are no strangers to racist attacks but recently the scale and ferocity of them has increased dramatically. In the space of four days eight people needed hospital treatment after incidents ranging from a knife attack on a 12 year old to the apparently pre planned ambush on Muktar Ahmed which resulted in him being placed in intensive care.

This recent torrent of racist violence must be met with resistance. We cannot allow these racist scum to continue to intimidate and attack our communities. But who can we rely on to protect our brothers, sisters, friends and family from racist attacks?

The police have done nothing to protect black and Asian youth from these vicious racists. They constantly harrass black youth and arrest them when they fight back in self defence. Last October the 'thugs in blue' viciously attacked the vigil for Quddus Ali (see pages 6 and 7). In Welling last October 7000 police were mobilised to defend the fascists and terrorise anti-racist demonstrators.

Racist attacks are on the increase not just in Tower Hamlets but across the country. It's up to us to organise our own defence from racist, fascist and police violence now. This is an urgent task. We don't want to see another brother or sister go through the pain and anguish that Quddus Ali or Muktar Ahmed have been through. But if it is to be effective it must be well organised and built through our schools and

workplaces.

Youth must take the lead in organising this and must demand that trade unions provide the necessary resources to build effective well disciplined organised self defence. Unions should provide the funds to train up workers and youth, provide tel-

ephones, minibuses and any other facilities needed. What these defence organisations do should be democratically decided by local youth groups, unions, anti-racist organisations and community groups. There is no time to lose - organise self defence!

School strike—

Tower Hamlet school students, supported by the Youth Against Racism in Europe have called a school strike and a demonstration for Wednesday 9 March in protest at the level of racist attacks in Tower Hamlets. *Revolution* is fully behind this call and will do all it can to ensure its success.

If you are a school student you should be on strike. Organise a group of you to go round the classes letting everyone know about the strike and the march. Argue that your teachers should come out in support of the strike and join the march. Already teachers unions have supported the strike and are against the disciplining of any school students. Make sure that students from your school don't just go home but go on the march.

But what should we do after the strike? We must make sure that the links made between the different schools is continued. Every student involved in the strike should attempt to get an active anti-racist group running in their school. Out of this we could build a borough-wide student

action group that could begin to organise school defence patrols.

We should demand that the council provide transport for students threatened with racist violence on their way to and from school. We should organise our own patrols to insure that our younger brothers and sisters can travel safely to school and make sure the streets are safe.

Setting up a telephone tree amongst students, anti-racist/fascists and community groups will allow us to respond quickly to any potential racist or fascist threat in the area. Training of youth will be an important task in building the confidence and trust of those involved in the street patrols. We should approach local unions, in particular the National Union of Teachers (NUT) to provide support for these activities.

This strike will show that black and white youth will not tolerate the racist and fascist low life that think they can get away with intimidation and violence. In May the BNP will be standing many candidates in East

REVOLUTION: WHO WE ARE

Revolution is written and produced by youth supporters of Workers Power (Britain) and the League for a Revolutionary Communist International.

We live in a world full of injustice, oppression and poverty. While millions starve, food is destroyed in order to keep its price up. The latest technology in health care cannot be used in many countries because of the payment of foreign debt.

Even the most basic provisions of a good water supply and decent sanitation are denied to people all around the world. Meanwhile ever greater ecological disasters loom on the horizon.

Revolution does not believe there is anything 'natural' about the state of the world. We believe that what is happening is because of the world wide system of capitalism.

It is a system that runs with the sole intention of making money for a tiny handful of capitalists who own and control industry and the land.

We believe that it is possible to create a new and better world system, a socialist system. It would be an international system which means the fight to achieve it must be international and is why Workers Power (Britain) is part of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International that organises groups from Bolivia to New Zealand.

Because we are internationalists we

support all struggles by people oppressed by imperialism - including the struggle to get British troops out of Ireland.

Because we are internationalists we oppose imperialist militarism: we say not a penny or a person for the defence of this system.

A socialist system would be based on common ownership and would produce and organise society to provide the necessities and luxuries of life for all according to a democratically worked out plan.

This means instead of having people homeless because the privately owned land and building companies only build houses when they can make money, we will all own the land, collectively and we will plan that to use the bricks that lie unused and the building workers who are unemployed to build the homes needed.

To get this, industry and land will have to be taken out of the hands of the few. But this group of people, the ruling class, will never allow us to do this without a fight. The government was prepared to mobilise thousands of police to attack the Unity Demo last October, just imagine what they would be prepared to do to protect their whole system of wealth and power. That is why we believe we need a workers revolution.

But we cannot wait until then, we have to fight against exploitation and

oppression now. We support all workers' struggles. We support the struggles against women's oppression, racism and homophobia.

Whether it is workers on strike, women fighting for abortion rights or black people fighting against racism it is often young people who are leading these struggles.

We fight for action that will win and in such a way that the struggles of today can prepare us for the revolution of tomorrow. We try to turn today's struggles into a struggle for power by fighting for workers control, workers self-defence etc.

Revolution stands in the tradition of over 150 years of revolutionary socialism. Our movement is based on the ideas of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, applied to today's conditions.

Revolution aims to build a revolutionary youth movement, to win thousands and thousands of youth to supporting and building a revolutionary party that can lead the working class to power.

So don't just sit there sell Revolution and become a supporter!

Contact us at: BCM Box 7750 London WC1N 3XX • Send us your letters and reports!

Revolution is written and produced by youth supporters of Workers Power (Britain) and the League for a Revolutionary Communist International. ■

9 March! BEDWORTH

London. Past experience shows that while the fascists carry out their racist election campaigns, their hit squads terrorise and beat up black people. School students are leading the fight back against racism in the borough. We must show the cowards of the BNP that when black and white youth fight back we are a mightier force because we are determined to destroy these scum and drive them back into the sewers where they belong.

Join your local YRE. For details contact: National Office c/o PO Box 858, London E2 7RR
Telephone: 081 533 4533

A CONTINGENT FROM Leicester YRE and fellow anti-fascists travelled to a demonstration in Bedworth on 19 February. The demo was called because the BNP have targeted Bedworth for recruitment. As a predominantly white area with high unemployment they see it as an ideal area for recruitment and spreading their racist and fascist propaganda.

One hundred or so attended the march from the YRE and other anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations. Freshly placed stickers in the toilets made us aware of a fascist presence in the area. As the march set off through the streets of Bedworth three masked fascists were seen over the road taking photos of the demonstrators (to circulate as targets for attack at a later date). Once the march reached them, a group from the march crossed the road to have a chat. On

seeing the approach the fascists attempted to run away but fortunately left one behind to face the music. A heated 'discussion' ensued and the demonstrators managed to hit home the message that fascists are not welcome in Bedworth. His dilemma was resolved only by the timely intervention of the local constabulary. Promptly escorted to the local police station he was soon joined by his cohorts. It was the first time some of the demonstrators had been involved in 'discussions' with fascist and further opportunities are eagerly awaited. This incident only served to increase the volume of the march that culminated with a rally addressed by YRE, AFA and Trade Union speakers. The march was very successful and the BNP were shown that any attempt to organise in the Bedworth area will be met with similar action. ■

DEMONSTRATE AGAINST RACIST ATTACKS!...

ASSEMBLE 12:30PM STEPNEY GREEN EAST LONDON. WEDNESDAY 9 MARCH 1994

IDEAS

What is Communism?

BY RICHARD BRENNER

South London

Communism. The word conjures up images of a grey world in which everyone is the same, where queues form for everyday goods, no-one can speak their mind for fear of the secret police, and everyone wears boring clothes. It is an image of uniformity, repression and sterility. Since the collapse of the Eastern European states in 1989, the word communism has carried with it another, even more negative, image - the image of failure.

But for us, communism means something different. It means fighting the deep-seated injustices of the system we live under today, siding with working class people all around the world when they fight for a better life, and pointing the way forward to a future free from poverty, oppression and war.

We live under the capitalist system. A handful of multi-millionaires own the majority of the world's wealth. While enough food is produced to feed the entire world, farmers are paid to destroy food that cannot be sold at a profit and millions of people go hungry. Every year tens of thousands of us leave school and go straight onto the dole or onto rip-off "training schemes" that have no jobs at the end of them. We are told there is not enough work to go round, but there are homes and hospitals to be built, education and transport systems to be improved, a million and one things that people could be doing to improve life for all of us. Whole countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are held in backwardness, not because these countries have less natural wealth than Europe, Japan or America, but because every decision that is made about what to produce and how to produce it is controlled by

the powerful Western banks and companies. All they want is to make huge profits, at the expense of the needs of the vast majority.

Communism is a criticism of the chaos and inhumanity of the capitalist system - but it goes further than that. Some people only want to dream of a better existence. For them there are a multitude of religions, every one of them preaching obedience to authority in the here and now in return for the worst deal ever offered - eternal bliss once you're six feet under. Communists make no such childish promises. Our answer is not to wait but to fight back now.

Communists believe that the most important thing dividing humanity is not race, nationality, sex or religion. It is class. Alongside the tiny handful of profiteers stands the working class. A billion strong and growing, with 100 million industrial workers at its core, the world working class is made up of people with no stake in the capitalist system. While the capitalists own factories, plant, machinery, huge blocks of shares and money to invest all over the world at the touch of a button, the working class have nothing besides a handful of hard-earned possessions and the ability to work. Our work produces everything, all the wealth on the planet, but it is owned and controlled by the capitalists.

From the struggle of black workers in South Africa through to the mass campaign against the Poll Tax in Britain, it has been the working class that

has come to the fore in the fight against exploitation and oppression. Out of its struggles the working class has pointed the way forward to a new type of society - in which production can be planned to meet real needs, in which all the work that needs to be done can be divided up between the millions of people available to do it.

Many people say communism is undemocratic. But look at the excuse for democracy that exists in this country today. We get the chance to put a cross on a piece of paper every five years, but all the real decisions are made for us by company directors, civil servants, judges, police and military chiefs that no-one ever elected and who come from the families of the rich and powerful.

The struggles of the working class throughout history show that there is a better way, a type of democracy that really puts people in control of their lives. Time and again, workers have formed their own democratic councils, which draw in delegates from the factories, the workplaces, the estates and the unions, and which elect representatives who can be replaced at any time, who are accountable to the people they are supposed to be fighting for. It was workers' councils of this type that formed the backbone of the Russian Revolution in 1917. In the early days of the revolution, the Russian working class had more real control, more power over their own lives than any other people in history. They used it to abolish the profit system and plan the economy for the good of the people.

That is what communists are fighting for today. If the working class was in power, then all the inequalities of

capitalist society could be gradually overcome. Instead of being used to throw more workers onto the dole, new machinery could be used to ease the burden of work, shortening the working week. Organising work for need rather than profit would enable jobs that are currently done in the home, such as educating children of pre-school age, doing the washing, cooking and so on, to be carried out in decent nurseries, laundries and restaurants, freeing women from the burden of doing the housework.

This would not be a grey, lifeless society, but one in which real democratic control would bring with it a riot of debate and discussion about the sort of world we want to build. We would have more time for leisure, more variety, more culture, more education, and more freedom. Instead of the vast organisations of state repression that the capitalist minority have to maintain to keep the working class majority in our place, a working class state would need no secret bureaucracy or permanent army set up against the people. For as long as the minority of capitalists still existed and fought to get back control, they could be resisted by the armed majority, organised on democratic lines. But without their private property, the capitalist class would eventually wither away, allowing all the tasks of the new working class state to be taken over by society as a whole.

That is our goal - a communist society without classes, private property or a state. It is possible because capitalism has made it possible by developing industries that can produce enough for all, and alongside it developing the working class, which can organise a new system under which all can enjoy what is produced. It is necessary because capitalism has made it necessary, by reducing the majority of humanity to poverty and desperation.

Communism is possible and is necessary, but it is not inevitable. There are tremendous obstacles to it. The first is the state apparatus. The police and army will be used against any serious attempt to get rid of the profit system. That is what they are there for. In Chile in 1973 the Socialist Party tried to change society along socialist lines through carrying out new laws in parliament. The army soon showed where the real power lies under capitalism, by overthrowing the elected government and murdering tens of thousands of the most determined workers.

That is why communists are revolutionaries. We know that all history shows the need for the workers to smash the capitalists' army, police and bureaucracy through a violent uprising. In their place we want government to be based on workers' councils and the armed working class.

There is another obstacle to communism. It is the nation state. No one country can hope to produce enough for its people by itself. The world economy is international. The Russian Revolution failed in the end because it did not spread to other countries in time. They had to trade and do deals with the West, and a layer of bureaucrats developed who grew rich and powerful from their position as middlemen. These parasites - the Stalinists - abandoned the idea of world revolution and claimed it would be possible to build communism in one country. They smashed the workers' organisations, abolished working class democracy, scrapped rights for women, national minorities, lesbians and gays. They threw real communists like Leon Trotsky out of the Communist Party and murdered them in their thousands. They tried to plan the economy without allowing the mass of the people any say in what should be produced, and they produced low quality goods and a drab existence for the masses. They have ended up trying to bring back capitalism to Russia, with all the mass unemployment, crime, nationalism and despair that it brings with it.

No wonder communism is a dirty word today. We have to restore its true meaning - world revolution, workers' democracy, equality and real freedom. ■



FIGHTING RACISM

TOWER HAMLETS NINE

ON A WARM September evening hundreds of Asian youth gathered in front of the London Hospital in the East London borough of Tower Hamlets to stage a vigil. They came to show their respect for a fallen brother, 17 year old Quddus Ali, who lay in a coma after a savage racist attack two nights before. Their presence also reflected the mounting anger of Bengali youth at racist thuggery and routine police harassment in the area.

For nearly an hour the vigil remained militant but peaceful. Then, a couple of police officers shoved their way into the crowd to snatch one of the demonstrators. Police and youth jostled, coppers drew their truncheons and suddenly a full scale battle was under way. In the space of two minutes dozens of riot police descended on Whitechapel High Street, some striking indiscriminate blows at youth. By the end of the fracas there were numerous injuries and nine young men in custody.

Initially, the arrested youths faced charges of riot, which carries a potential maximum sentence of life in prison. A campaign however, rapidly developed to support the youths whose only 'crime' was self-defence in the face of police brutality.

Each time the defendants appeared for court hearings the cam-

Drop the charges!

paign mobilised pickets, made up largely of school and further education students from around Tower Hamlets. On Tuesday, 1 February the campaign notched a small but significant victory as magistrates threw out all charges against three of the nine, while dropping the riot charges against the remaining six.

The fight is far from over as these six still face the possibility of long prison terms. There is one more scheduled appearance at magistrates' court on Tuesday 29 March before three separate jury trials begin, probably in the early autumn.

Meanwhile the campaign still needs both financial and moral support for pickets of the court,

legal costs and meetings to further publicise the case. This is all the more vital in the wake of early February's wave of racist attacks and the upcoming local elections in which the fascists of the BNP will be standing more candidates.

Opposite Revolution speaks to one of the original nine, Mobarok Karim, who no longer faces charges. Now 21 years old, Karim is currently unemployed as a direct result of the case. ■

• For further information, speakers etc contact: TH9 Defence Campaign, PO Box 273, London E7 or phone: 081 548 0099

Friday 4 March: benefit concert/rave at the Rocket, University of North London, Holloway Road N7 from 10pm onwards (near Holloway Rd tube)



The Tower Hamlets Nine outside Thames Magistrates in Bow

NEXT PICKET....TUESDAY 29 MARCH....PICKET OF BOW RD MAGISTRATES' COURT LONDON E3....AT 9.30 AM....(NEAR BOW RD TUBE)BE THERE!....

Revolution: How did you feel when the judge announced the dropping of the charges against you?

Mobarak Karim: I felt weird because in the first place I should have never been there [court]. They arrested me for nothing; they wasted my time; I was working at that time as well. I lost my job because of that [arrest], having to go to court, go to meetings with the solicitor.

Revo: Had you actually been on the vigil for Quddus Ali that evening?

MK: Yeah, that's right. I'd just come from work, gone home and then straight to Whitechapel.

Revo: Did you know Quddus Ali at all? What motivated you to go to the vigil?

MK: Personally, no. I'd never seen his face. He was an Asian bloke, a brother and too many Asian people are getting beaten up and what have you. Anyone could fight back, but by fighting back you won't prove anything. All it's going to be is you going to prison for nothing - so you're better off doing it legal like the vigil or that's what everyone thought at the time.

Revo: How has the experience of the past six months changed how you look at the police?

MK: The experience? Well what can I say - I was too worried 'cos I didn't want to go inside and I ain't got a criminal record. I'd just gone to the vigil and that was it, then the police decided to really get at the crowd. They went for my brother, just because he said he was my brother and the next thing they had him on the floor.

Revo: Is there a lot of harassment of Bengali lads

by the police around here?

MK: Yes, there's been a lot of harassment in our street, for instance. If there are four [or more] friends walking together they'll definitely get stopped. So it's a bit dodgy 'round here and that's why you'll find the kids hanging in the youth club rather than outside. When we were small we used to go to this park until the police started coming down every single day and hassling us - and they never found a thing on us. I suppose they needed a laugh so they got it by picking on little kids. But it's getting worse every day. We even have white groups, gangs coming down Cannon Street Road, maybe once every two weeks... Organised, and I think it's definitely some sort of political party organising it.

Revo: So you think it may be linked to the British National Party?

MK: Yeah and things have definitely got worse since last year.

Revo: What sort of support are you looking for in terms of the remaining six still facing charges?

INTERVIEW

"They arrested me for nothing!"

Mobarak Karim, one of the Tower Hamlets 9 who has already been acquitted, tells his story to **REVOLUTION**

MK: All kinds of support really. We need all we can get to make the police see sense. By the way, that includes the support of white people. I've got white friends who even signed the petition and whatever. It's just the police always hassling Asian people and they never seem to stop white groups.

Revo: One final thing; as a young Asian man living in Tower Hamlets do you think the time has come to organise to defend yourselves, given the kind of harassment you're getting routinely from white gangs along with the long-standing problems with the police in this area?

MK: Yeah, we actually need to get organised, but the problem is we can't trust no-one right now. There were all these people who come in and say they're going to help us, say they're with us and then a couple of days later they ain't around. I feel like every youth in the Tower Hamlets area, white, black, Asian - someone's using us, but people don't know who's using them. ■

TORY ATTACKS

Defend single parents

READING TORY PAPERS and listening to the bosses' news it is clear that there is a 'problem' in Britain today. Young single parents cost the government cash, cash they haven't got. So they intend to tackle this 'burden' on our pockets.

The plan is this: benefits for single parents ages 18-24 will be cut to that of a single person of the same age. Hostel places will be offered instead of council housing. The Child Support Act and the Child Support Agency have been set up to sort out maintenance and benefits. Single parents, usually women are forced to give personal details about when and where their child was conceived, the type of relationship they had with the absent parent, and who it is.

They then harass the absent parent into paying more maintenance, then cut the single parent's benefit pound for pound. If the maintenance payments mean that they are then above income support level, they lose

other benefits like free milk tokens, free school meals and even income support.

So this 'burden' is being off-loaded, take away benefits-cut the cost. But who has caused the problem of lack of cash - Are there so many single parents in Britain today that we just can't afford them? For us the answer is simple - no!

Single parents are less than 2% of the population (1.3 million in a population of 50 million) and of this 50% of them, and their children live on under £100 per week and of these 93% are women.

The truth is that having cut taxes for the rich and increased them for the poor, having sold off all the countries assets, the government's purse is empty. A logical solution to the empty treasury's safe is not to lock it, but tax those who can fill it - the rich!

Single parents, the majority of which are women do face a problem, this problem is not that they are single, but that they live in a Tory capitalist Britain.

Employment prospects are poor and where they can work there are few if any nursery or childcare facilities which don't eat up most of their wages. When they do earn a wage, it is usually in a job that is low skilled, part time and low paid - women's wages are still 21% less

than men's. These jobs offer few if any prospects of improving women's position in society.

Single parents do not need further government harassment. What they need is 24 hour childcare to allow them to work or study. And they need equality in pay, training for skilled work, secure housing and the right to choose to live free from interference of both absent parents and government departments. What single parents need is to get rid of this government of hypocrites and the rotten system, capitalism, they manage. ■

BOLSHIE WOMEN



A WEEKEND OF DISCUSSION
FOR WOMEN ABOUT
SOCIALISM AND WOMEN'S
LIBERATION • 9/10 APRIL
SHEFFIELD • £10/£3 conc.
DETAILS FROM ADDRESS ON
PAGE 2

MUSIC

By any means necessary

THE YRE ALBUM *By any means necessary* is a compilation of music by various artists with the proceeds going to the anti-fascist movement. This double album boasts some big names such as Suede, Bjork, The Shamen, Jamiroquai and The Farm. There are also many up and coming bands which are well known to many young "alternative" types including Credit to the Nation, Corner Shop and Chumbawamba. The album is certainly diverse in terms of the music and there is something for every rock fan. Other bands include Marxman, St Etienne, Fun^da^mental, Buzzcocks and Neds Atomic Dustbin.

I enjoyed just about every track on the album and will look out for sounds by some of those I had never heard of before, especially Fabulous. My favourite track on the album was *Good Morning Sinners* by The Farm. This song had an excellent beat and I found myself humming the tune for days after first listening to it. *One Day* by Bjork is a great mellow track.

Undoubtedly the most inspirational track was *The Day the Nazi Died* by Chumbawamba. This was a great song with superb lyrics summed up by the lines:

"They're burning houses down and peddling racist lies, and we'll never rest again until every Nazi dies."

Personality Recession by Fabulous and *Crystal Night* by Buzzcocks were two more enjoyable tracks and indeed the rap bands like Credit to the Nation and Fun^da^mental performed really well as did pre-



viously unknown to me A.T.R. with *Midi Junkies*. I could pick out every track on the album and say there was something that I liked about it. One band was sadly not on the album, Blaggers ITA, who are my most inspirational anti-fascist band and whose hardcore leftist streetfighter lyrics I thought were sadly missed.

One thing that is clear to see from the album is that rock stars, who are an important influence on youth, are obviously aware that there is a problem that needs to be and can be dealt with. It is brilliant of them to show their support with an album that has a clear political agenda of anti-fascism as well as anti-racism. It gives the message to youth that many big rock stars are prepared to take a stance on issues that affect youth and that they are coming out on our side not the racists

and fascists. Hopefully people who buy the album for the music will hear the message of anti-fascism and get involved with the YRE.

The album is a great follow up to the Liverpool Festival organised by the YRE last summer, at which some of the bands on the album performed.

It seems as if fascist music is going through a bad patch (what a shame!). Recently the Blood and Honour fascist gig at Beacontree was stopped by anti-fascists and Ian Stuart Donaldson (lead singer of the Nazi band Skrewdriver) is dead.

By contrast, anti-fascist music is becoming more and more popular. Well done YRE, let's hope more anti-fascist albums are launched in the future. Meanwhile buy this one and party on! ■

by a Manchester Revolution Supporter

AGE OF CONSENT?

SEX is a very important part of our lives. We spend a lot of time thinking about it, and probably a fair bit of time doing it too. But according to the law, sex is something strictly reserved for the over-sixteens and for gay men over the age of eighteen.

If you are under sixteen or a gay man under eighteen and want to have sex with someone then that person stands the chance of being prosecuted, regardless of the fact that you have consented to having sex.

From 1985 to 199, 1 280 gay men have been prosecuted for having sex with a man under the age of 21. This has resulted in an average of 28 prison sentences a year. If a young woman under 16 has sex she can be taken into care on the grounds that she is in "moral danger" to herself because of her "abnormal sexual appetite"!

The Age of Consent Law continues the myth that youth have no sexuality. The right wing moralists argue that encouraging young people to have sex may expose them to "unnatural" forms of sexuality and corrupt their "innocence". We are brought up to believe that sex is something that should only take place between adult men and women and for the purpose of making babies.

But there is no such thing as "natural" behaviour. Is there anything "natural" about getting on a bus or sending spaceships to the moon? We determine what is "natural" by shaping and developing the world we live in, including ourselves, through thought and action.

Under class society, we are told that the "natural" arena for sexual relationships is within the family. It is in the direct interests of the bosses to perpetuate morals and beliefs that uphold the "family" because it serves some very important functions for capitalism.

Without the family, the state would have to provide all the things that women do for nothing: washing, cleaning, cooking, bringing up babies, looking after old or ill relatives. As you can see, this would be a massive drain on the bosses' profits.

The family is also the mecha-

nism by which the bosses drum into us from an early age what our roles should be. Women should be good wives and mothers and men should be strong hardworking providers. The family polices our moral and social activity, it is where we learn to obey authority. Any expression of choice, especially sexuality, is bludgeoned out of us. When we try to have different kinds of sex (gay and lesbian sex, intergenerational sex etc) we are described as "perverse" and "abnormal". All of these attitudes are reinforced by institutions like the church and repressive laws like the Age of Consent that tell us when and how we should have sex. The Age of Consent Law should be abolished completely. Its function has always been to give the state the right to oppress us and deny us any choice in how we form sexual relationships. Instead of being able to discover our sexuality and learn how to express our desires, we grow up in ignorance and fear about it. Some argue that the Age of Consent Law protects children from abuse, because young people can be manipulated by adults into consenting to sex. But there are existing laws that deal with rape and child abuse.

The key to ending the exploita-

tion and abuse of youth is to fight for young people to have control over their own lives, not to criminalise us for having sex.

Allowing youth full access to information, advice and counselling would go some way to dealing with young people's worries and fears about sex. But as long as young people are denied independence and are trapped by the power relationship between adults and children then the oppression of young people will continue.

When young people are forced to leave home to escape family life they often end up on the streets of London, sleeping homeless or selling their bodies for survival.

This is class society. It distorts and degrades human relationships, by denying the most basic right of free expression. It is incapable of providing decent housing or social provision that would give youth the independence to determine their own future, free from the constraints and oppression of family life. If we want to live in a society, free from people telling us what is "natural" and what isn't then the fight for liberation will require more than just abolishing another repressive law. Socialism is the only answer. ■

Last month in Parliament a vote to equalise the age of consent for gay men to 16 was defeated. Instead the age was brought down from 21 to 18. But this means the law still accepts that gay sex is different to heterosexual sex and the law still discriminates against gay men. After the vote thousands of angry lesbians and gay men and their supporters showed their anger and frightened MPs had to leave Parliament through the back door. Below we argue that although we should fight for the immediate equalisation of the age of consent we will also have to fight against the Age of Consent Law itself



FROM BACK PAGE ...

on 30 January 1972 the British army shot dead 13 unarmed demonstrators. One other died later in hospital. This day became known as Bloody Sunday. After this Catholic youth flocked to join the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

Tragically from the start, the middle class nationalist leadership of the IRA had the idea that a small elite guerrilla force isolated from the rest of the working class could drive out the British troops.

The grip of Loyalism was strengthened over Protestant workers as the Nationalist leaders failed to try to win them over to a joint struggle with Catholics against British imperialism and against the Orange bosses.

The Loyalists who "sprayed" the bar in Greysteel have very different aims to the IRA, the see any of the 40% Catholic minority as a legitimate target. They are seeking to maintain their privileges over the Catholics. The IRA's campaign, on the other hand, is directed against the British state, they do not see "any Protestant" as a legitimate target. They are fighting against the Northern Ireland state that maintains discrimination and keeps the working class of Ireland divided. Because of this socialists support the IRA against the British state despite our criticisms of the politics of the nationalists.

The latest round of peace negotiations will not mean an end to the oppression of Catholics. As long as Ireland is divided, new generations of youth will come forward to fight against the Loyalist state. For as long as they do, British workers and youth have a burning duty to fight for troops out now and self-determination for Irish people as a whole.

GUILDFORD 4 BRITISH JUSTICE 0



In the Name of the Father is a film about the Guildford Four. In 1974 Paul Hill, Paddy Armstrong, Carole Richardson, and Gerry Conlon were sent to jail having been convicted of the Guildford pub bombings. In 1989 they were released as innocent. This climb-down by the British state was due to evidence which proved that the police had "attempted to pervert the cause of justice". Translated, this means the prisoners were beaten up, deprived of food and water, threatened with guns by firearms officers, and mentally tortured for several days in order that the police could obtain false confessions.

The fear, frustration and desperation of the prisoners is captured well by the film. When Gerry Conlon breaks down whilst being tortured, crying "I didn't do it, I didn't do it! Just give me the paper I'll sign anything.", I felt as though I would have signed anything too. Even more worrying is the fact that all this occurred before the Guildford Four were charged with any crime.

The shows how the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) was passed a few days before the arrests. The effect of this act should not be underestimated. The PTA, which is still in place, allows suspected terrorists to be held in police custody for seven days without being charged and gives the police every opportunity to fabricate a case by destroying their prisoners and any evidence found in their favour.

Despite the fact that the Guildford Four case was covered very

well, my enjoyment of the film was curtailed by the way the IRA were portrayed. The film makes it clear that none of the Guildford Four were supporters of the IRA let alone members of an active service unit, and this is true. However it goes on to portray the real IRA members as violent, vengeful individuals and this is misleading. The Catholic community in Northern Ireland are subject to continuous harassment and torture at the hands of the British state, and the IRA is fighting to rid their country of this oppressive army of occupation. Whilst their tactics may not always be popular it is unrealistic to think they could fight the injustices of the British state and its army without being armed.

The case of the Guildford Four was not merely a miscarriage of justice or an attempt to pervert the course of justice by individual police officers, it was part of the systematic discrimination and injustice carried out by the British state against its perceived enemy. Neither is it the case that this example is isolated. There are many more victims of British "justice" rotting in jail on the evidence of uncorroborated confessions.

We demand that all political prisoners should be released from British jails. *In the Name of the Father* is a powerful film and well worth watching, and even though it is enraging that the British state's cover up succeeds in this case, in the end, the good guys win!■

BY T.K. - South London ★

IRELAND

Troops Out Now!



TWO MEN WALK into a bar on Halloween. They are both wearing masks, at the pool table and around the bar everyone thinks it's a joke—for a split second. But they are holding real sub machine guns. They empty their magazines after saying "trick or treat". They reload and empty another two clips into the bar. Seven people died.

The massacre took place in Greysteel, Northern Ireland, last year. The media said that the slaughter was part of a cycle of tit-for-tat sectarian violence between Protestant and Catholic terrorists and between them stand the neutral forces of the British Army. The reality is very different from this warring tribes explanation.

For hundreds of years Ireland was a colony of Britain. The Irish did not have their own government and were ruled directly by London. In 1918, in an election of all Ireland, the majority voted for Sinn Fein who wanted an independent Ireland. Sinn Fein set up a government in Ireland and fought an anti-imperialist war of independence. Britain would not abide by the wishes of the majority of the Irish people but it could not win the war, instead Ireland was partitioned in 1921.

BY CHRIS, LEICESTER

Britain kept hold of part of the rich industrial North and conceded nominal independence to 26 of Ireland's 32 counties. The Irish province of Ulster originally had nine counties in which Catholics were a majority. Partition carved out six of these counties to ensure that Protestant Loyalists were in a majority in the new Northern Ireland State. With partition, tens of thousands of Northern Catholics were driven out of their homes by Loyalist terror gangs. Discrimination that already existed before 1921, was institutionalised. The Northern Ireland parliament was permanently dominated by Protestant Loyalists. Catholics were carved out of power through a property qualification on the vote or changing election boundaries. In 1966 in Derry for example there were 20,102 Catholics and 10,274 Protestants in the adult population. The Loyalist state resolved this by giving the Protestant electoral wards 12 seats and the Catholic wards 8. Catholics were always bottom of the list in housing, jobs and education.

In the Autumn of 1968 a civil rights movement was

started. When it marched for equal rights the B-Specials (part time soldiers) and gangs of thugs from the Orange Order (Loyalist groups) attacked the peaceful demonstrators. Soon Loyalist mobs were attacking the Catholic ghettos nightly. In response Catholics formed street committees to organise the defence of their communities. Barricades were built and courageously defended. The Civil Rights Movement was spilling over into a full-blown anti-Unionist and therefore anti-British revolt.

It was a situation the British were not willing to tolerate, under the pretext of keeping the two sides apart, the Labour Government sent British troops in. It was not a "peace-keeping" force. Their real motives were to defeat the anti-Unionist revolt and stabilise the situation so that bosses could continue to exploit Northern workers.

The British army took down the barricades defending the Catholic areas and began to search houses for weapons. The British government introduced new repressive laws and started internment (imprisonment without trial). At a march against internment

CONTINUED PAGE 11